

CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE ACTIVITIES



TRAFFIC RESTRICTIONS • DISABLED VEHICLES AND ACCIDENTS



PUBLIC SERVICE MESSAGES • TEST MESSAGES

ROAD AND DRIVING CONDITIONS • SPECIAL EVENTS

DMS system operation

Each WSDOT regional traffic office is responsible for the operation of the DMS system and has a designated DMS specialist. The specialist schedules messages, answers public and private inquiries, and coordinates with WSDOT entities and other governmental agencies. Other agencies include, but are not limited to:

- Washington State Patrol
- Cities and counties
- Oregon Department of Transportation
- Oregon State Patrol

Dedicated Traffic Control DMS System

DMS systems dedicated to specific traffic control functions (usually portable and used at construction sites) must first display messages intended for the main use, such as lane use or regulatory speed limit. In addition to the dedicated message, signs that can display alternate messages do so simultaneously.

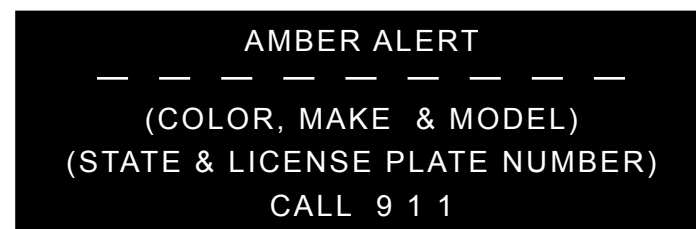
Documentation of Usage

Documenting DMS operations provide important backup information that supports regulatory enforcement, possible tort defense, and safety operations. A log of DMS message operations is maintained for:

- Traffic restrictions
- Incidents
- Construction and maintenance activities
- Amber alerts
- Public service announcements

Amber Alerts

In the event of an AMBER Alert, WSDOT activates its DMS statewide. Guidelines for specific information is shown below (filling in the spaces with the appropriate information):



DMS messages are displayed in the two-panel format (where applicable) with the flashing beacons. AMBER alert messages are displayed unless the DMS is needed to display traffic advisory type messages where motorist safety is concerned, or if the AMBER Alert message display itself creates a traffic hazard.

For More Information

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July 2004

Dynamic Message Signs

Essential traffic control devices used in conjunction with WSDOT traffic management system. The signs communicate real-time traffic information, allowing motorists to make quick decisions in response to roadway or adverse weather conditions.

Dynamic Message Signs (DMS)

A Dynamic Message Sign displays words, numbers or symbols along the highway that can be changed on command remotely or on-site. Messages are typically displayed when a response or decision is needed by motorists.

DMS Enhance Safety

WSDOT’s main goal in deploying DMS is to enhance motorist safety. DMS messages provide real-time traffic information to motorists, allowing them to make intelligent travel decisions. All messages are prioritized by the following:

Safety related — Messages that are directly related to safety are given first priority for display. Examples of this type of message may include winter traction device requirements, mountain pass information, or flammable restrictions.

Roadway closures — The DMS system is used to display road or ramp closures, regardless of the reason for the closures (accident, construction, weather, etc.).

Minor traffic impacts — The DMS system is used to display information about minor traffic impacts. Such as construction lane closures, blocking incidents and delay information.

Public text messages — The last priority for the DMS system is transportation related Public Service Messages. These messages do not directly impact motorists, and therefore are not critical to the safe and efficient operation of the transportation system. Examples of these messages are Click It or Ticket, Rideshare information, or announcements about traveler information phone numbers like 511.

Test messages — This message may be used to perform sign operation/maintenance checks and to ensure operation of new DMS.

SAFETY • ROADWAY CLOSURES • MINOR TRAFFIC IMPACTS



PUBLIC TEXT MESSAGES • TEST MESSAGES

Messages on Dynamic Message Signs

DMS play an important role in highway safety, traffic operations and the improved use of existing facilities. The signs are high profile devices specifically designed to attract road users’ attention. Since over-using the signs can dilute their effectiveness –displaying only appropriate real-time traffic-related messages increases the likelihood of motorists paying attention to the information being displayed.

Some signs have the capability to display alternate messages – and since DMS are not always dedicated to a specific traffic control function, the request for messages is dependent on changing traffic conditions, such as:

- Traffic restrictions — In this case DMS refer to prohibition of vehicles from using any or all portions of a roadway. Restrictions may include road closures, bridge draw span openings, flammable restrictions, and weight, height or width restrictions.
- Disabled vehicles and accidents — These messages describe the general nature of the incident (e.g. Accident At Mercer) and traffic impacts (e.g. Congestion From Northgate To Ship Canal Bridge).
- Road and driving conditions — Used on Snoqualmie Pass to describe variable speed limit, weather conditions or driving conditions.
- Special events — DMS may be used to manage freeway traffic destined for high impact events when traffic conditions warrant.
- Construction and maintenance activities — The DMS should be used when construction or maintenance activities requires the driver to perform complex or unusual maneuvers.

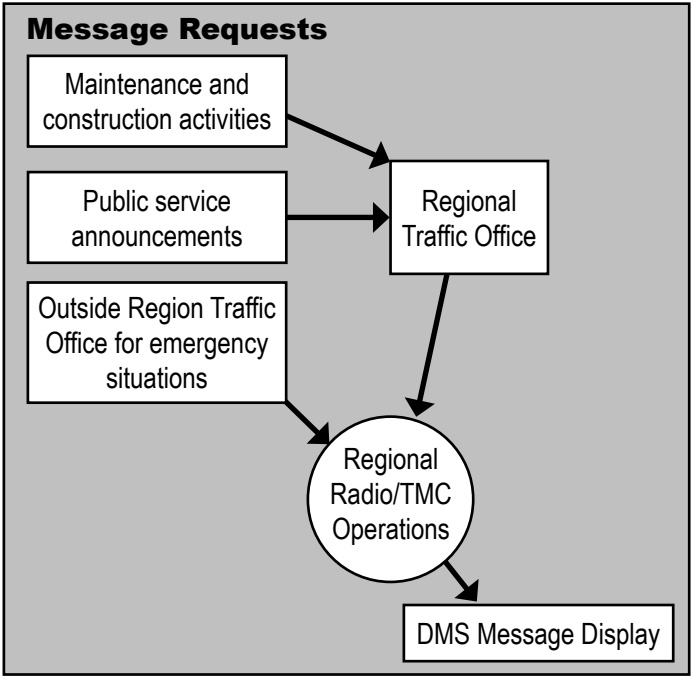
Requests for Messages

Message requests come in from a variety of places. Direct message requests need to go to the appropriate personnel:

- Requests from outside the Region Traffic Office for emergency situations are routed through Regional Radio Operations office.
- Requests for messages relating to maintenance and construction activities are routed through the Region Traffic Office in advance of the requested service.
- Requests for public service announcements are routed through the Region Traffic Office, to the attention of the DMS specialist.

DMS messages are programmed to give motorists enough time to read the message at freeway travel speeds. WSDOT recommends three seconds minimum exposure time per message for a three-line DMS. WSDOT also requires that motorists are given enough time to be able to read the entire message on a DMS twice.

- Message request information should include:
- Justification for using the DMS
 - Location/Geographical coverage required
 - Description of the activity
 - Intended times and dates of the activity



Locations of Dynamic Message Signs

